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A MOSAIC RECENTLY DISCOVERED AT JERUSALEM.

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THANKS to the kindness of Father Germer-Durand, I am able to forward to the BIBLICAL WORLD a photograph which he took of the mosaic recently discovered at Jerusalem, to the northwest of the Damascus Gate. This Augustinian father is one of the best-known of the archæologists resident in Jerusalem, and is always on the watch to register new discoveries. On my arrival in Jerusalem, late in April, I found that the mosaic, which had been only partially excavated, had been covered up by order of the director of public instruction, pending orders from Constantinople. Just before my departure from Jerusalem, June 1, the director informed me that he had received instructions from Constantinople to have the mosaic taken up and transported to the museum in that city. Unfortunately, I was obliged to leave before the mosaic was again uncovered, hence the brief notice which I now give is based on hearsay and on a study of the photograph.

On the ordnance map of Jerusalem it will be seen that the road outside the city going northwest from the Damascus Gate forks at a point some sixty yards from the gate. In July, 1894, while digging for foundation for a new house on the west fork, some three hundred and fifty yards from the gate, a Moham-medan came across a very beautiful mosaic. This is figured in the *Quarterly Statement* for 1894, as well as in my book, *Excavations at Jerusalem, 1894-1897*. The mosaic measures about twenty-one feet long by thirteen feet broad. It consists of tesserae of almost every color. Within a border showing the guilloche pattern we find a vase from which springs a vine with branches conventionally arranged in the form of circles, within which are various kinds of birds. At the east end is a small apse with an Armenian



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inscription to the effect that the place was in memory of all those Armenians whose name the Lord knows. That the mosaic represents the plan of a small mortuary chapel is confirmed by the small cave, containing human bones and lamps, found under the southwest corner. Dr. Murray is inclined to date the mosaic at about the time of Justinian.

The mosaic of which I send a photograph was discovered in the property of a Jew between the mosaic just described and the Damascus Gate. Owing to incomplete excavation, its extent has not yet been ascertained, but the area uncovered at the time the photograph was taken measures about twenty-three feet by twelve feet. It was found covered with soil to a depth of about four feet.

The most striking feature is a large panel inclosed in a small border and containing the seated figure of Orpheus wearing a tunic and conical cap, and playing a lyre. Behind him in a listening attitude are two satyrs, and around about him are various creatures, among which we may recognize a bear, a rabbit, an eagle, and a serpent. Beyond the narrow border is a much wider band consisting of leaves arranged in wreaths which contain human heads and figures of birds and animals. This wide band is in turn inclosed by a narrow border showing the guilloche pattern, extended below to surround three panels. The central panel contains two draped figures, separated by a column. The heads are apparently surrounded by aureoles, and in each figure the right hand clasps the breast. From the two names, ΘΕΩΔΩCΙΑ and ΓΕΩΡΓΙΑ, it appears that the figures represent females. The pattern of the two panels to the right and left is hidden by two apparently rude stones set into the mosaic. Not having seen the place itself, I am not able to give an opinion as to whether these are bases for columns belonging to the original construction, or whether they were inserted later. An examination of the photograph would incline me to the latter view.

Below these three panels we see three small, square panels. The one to the right shows a hunter inclosed in a square border; the one to the left has a dog, with similar border; and in the central panel the same border is worked in the form of a circle,

containing some wild beast, possibly a lion. Below these panels we recognize again the narrow guilloche border.

I am inclined to think that not more than two-thirds of this mosaic chamber has been excavated. It seems probable that the large panel containing the figure of Orpheus is the central point of the chamber, and that the series of rectangular panels (one of which contains the two draped female figures) extends entirely around it, and that this rectangular series is similarly surrounded by the border of square panels. I shall be curious to see whether further excavations justify my theory.

The curious mixture of styles has given rise to some discussion in Jerusalem. Orpheus and his animals suggest a pagan origin, while the two draped females with the names Theodosia and Georgia are evidently Christian. The view has been advanced that in the large panel we really have the figure of Christ, but under the guise of Orpheus. Thus, by the parable of the taming of the beasts, Christ's influence over evil passions would be indicated. It seems to me to be a far simpler explanation that we have here the floor of a villa belonging to a Byzantine gentleman who was possessed of classical tastes. Its proximity to the mosaic with birds, taken together with the fact that both were covered with about the same amount of *débris*, suggests about the same date for both, namely, the beginning of the sixth century of the Christian era.

The continued discovery of mosaics at Jerusalem gives much hope for the future. Besides the two here described, we have already two beautiful specimens in the Russian building on the Mount of Olives; the mosaic with Greek inscription in the church to the south of the Russian tower, excavated by myself in 1894; the mosaic chamber described in my *Excavations at Jerusalem*, p. 64; as well as some examples in the Augustinian property, not to mention fragments. The city is increasing rapidly to the north and south, and all excavations for foundations should be carefully watched by residents. The discovery at Jerusalem of a map mosaic similar to the one at Madeba would be indeed a notable event.